

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005

~~TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE~~
~~CONTAINS CODEWORD~~

November 11, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

INFORMATION ITEMS

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to Nigeria]

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-- Red Cross Ceases Direct Relief to Biafra: Red Cross officials told us privately in Geneva over the weekend that an extraordinary session of the International Committee had decided to (a) give up its futile four-month effort to negotiate a daylight flight agreement acceptable to both sides and (b) cease direct operational relief flights rather than resume a nighttime airlift in the face of Nigerian objections. As a practical matter, this means that the International Committee will now channel its funds, foodstocks and equipment (including US-donated aircraft) through various national Red Cross agencies -- such as the French and the Scandinavian -- which are willing to fly at night despite the risk of Federal attack.

Red Cross resources will probably also go to support the religious voluntary agencies flying from the isle of Sao Tome. However, the distribution of Red Cross resources and the duration of its support for these other agencies is not yet clear. In terms of relief, the actual diversion and use of now dormant money and airplanes could increase substantially the present nighttime operations from Sao Tome and neighboring Libreville (which is also the main source of French arms supply).

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The implications for the US are: (a) the loss of a prestigious and neutral international presence for the actual operation of any relief arrangement we might have negotiated, and (b) an almost inevitable run-in with the Federals if US-supplied cargo planes turn up, as they well may, in support of French relief operations which the Federals suspect of gunrunning. Continued US support for Biafran relief will now have to be given solely to a hazardous nighttime airlift which Federal Nigeria regards as a violation of its sovereignty.

*What does State suggest
we do?*

*Morris
S. Hing*

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